

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 OC-05 CCO-00 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 L-03 SS-15 NSC-05 /065 W

----- 063246

R 141330Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3202

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EARI, TU

SUBJ: PROPOSED TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF ESENBAGA AIRPORT

1. PAN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE AT ANKARA TOLD ECONOMIC/
COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR APRIL 14 THAT GOT PLANS CLOSE ESENBAGA
(ANKAR) AIRPORT DURING AUGUST-SEPTEMBER FOR REPAIRS. HE SAID LOCAL
AIRLINE REPRESENTATIVES CONSIDER THAT THE REPAIRS ARE INDEED
NECESSARY BUT THAT THEY ARE TROUBLED BY THE PERIOD INVOLVED
(13 AUGUST THROUGH 3 SEPTEMBER). THIS IS AT HEIGHT OF
TOURIST SEASON AND TIME WHEN CHARTER TRAFFIC BRINGING
TURKISH MIGRANT WORKERS HOME FROM WEST GERMANY IS AT
GREATEST INTENSITY. GOT PLANS TO SHIFT THY DOMESTIC
SERVICES TO ANKARA TO EITHER MURTED OR ETIMESGUT (BOTH
TURKISH MILITARY AIRPORTS) IF TURKISH AIR FORCE GIVES
APPROVAL. HOWEVER, INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS, BOTH FOR
FOREIGN CARRIERS AND TURKISH NATIONAL AIRLINE (THY)
CANNOT BE HANDLED AT EITHER OF THESE ALTERNATIVE AIRPORTS
BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPACE FOR CUSTOMS CONTROL AND HANDLING
OF HEAVY BAGGAGE, BROUGHT PARTICULARLY BY RETURNING
TURKISH WORKERS.

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2. PAN AM MANAGER SAID THAT THE AND ANKARA REPRESENTATIVES

OF LUFTANSA AND KLM, HAD CALLED ON DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR CIVIL AVIATION (GUNGEN) TO INFORM HIM OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT WILL RESULT BECAUSE OF TIMING OF AIRPORT CLOSURE. THY DOMESTIC SERVICES WILL BE OVERTAXED DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE TOURIST SEASON AND THY WILL PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SERVICE TO TRANSFER INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS BETWEEN ISTANBUL AND ANKARA. IN ADDITION TO THE INCONVENIENCE BOTH TURKEY AND THE FOREIGN CARRIERS WILL LOSE SUBSTANTIAL TOURIST REVENUES. DGCA TOLD THE AIRLINE REPRESENTATIVES THAT HE RECOGNIZED FULLY THE DIFFICULTIES AND HAD TRIED TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS BUT THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF REVERSING THE DECISION.

3. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED THIS MATTER ALSO WITH DGCA ON APRIL 14. LATTER SAID THAT REPAIR TO SERVICE OF ESENBOGA RUNWAY MUST ABSOLUTELY BE DONE AND THAT AIRLINES WILL SUBSEQUENTLY BENEFIT BECAUSE OF MUCH SMOOTHER RUNWAY. HE HAD MADE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO HAVE THE REPAIR WORK DONE ONLY AT NIGHT SO THAT AIRLINES COULD OPERATE DURING DAY WHEN VIRTUALLY ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS ARRIVE OR DEPART. HOWEVER, WORK IS BEING HANDLED BY TURKISH MINISTRY OF WORKS WHICH HAS TURNED DOWN PROPOSALS BY MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (OF WHICH DGCA IS A PART). GUNGEN SAID THAT NO REPEAT NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE AIRPORT. HE HOPES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ACCOMMODATE THY DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AT ALTERNATIVE AIRPORT BUT DECISION RESTS WITH TURKISH AIR FORCE. EFFORTS WILL ALSO BE MADE TO PERMIT INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS TO USE ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES ALSO. HOWEVER, GUNGEN THINKS THERE IS VERY LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT TURKISH AIR FORCE WILL AGREE TO THIS BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE FACILITIES AND OTHER REASONS. GUNGEN SAID THAT ESENBOGA AIRPORT WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE. SEVERAL SHIFTS WILL WORK ON THEIR REPAIRS. THE CONTRACTOR WILL GET A BONUS OF TWENTY TO THIRTY THOUSAND TURKISH LIRA PER DAY IF THE WORK CAN BE COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE. MOREOVER, CERTAIN REPAIRS AT THE ENDS OF THE ESENBOGA RUNWAY WILL BE HANDLED DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE AIRPORT WILL BE OPEN TO TRAFFIC BEFORE AND AFTER THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE FOR THEIR REPAIRS.

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4. COMMENT: PAN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE PASSED ON INFORMATION IN PARAGRAPH 1 FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ONLY. HE DID NOT SEE REASON TO REQUEST EMBASSY'S INTERVENTION WITH TURKISH AUTHORITIES ON GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION OR INEQUITABLE TREATMENT. ECONOMIC/COMMERCE COUNSELOR SAID HE WOULD NEVERTHELESS EXPLORE MATTER WITH DGCA TO SEE IF THERE WAS POSSIBILITY OF HANDLING THE REPAIRS AT A LESS

INCONVENIENT TIME. ON BASIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED
BY DGCA (PARAGRAPH 3) WE SEE LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF OB-
TAINING ANY CHANGE IN SCHEDULE FOR CLOSURE OF AIRPORT.
EMBASSY WILL HOWEVER KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PAN AM REPRE-
SENTATIVE AND DGCA.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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